



## **McDowell Corridor: Revitalizing a Livable Community**



## **SUMMER 2009**

***Leaders in Non-Partisan Knowledge-Based Solutions***

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LINKS' purpose is to conduct relevant and timely research; provide balanced non-partisan information, analysis and perspectives on community issues; serve as a convener and forum for the critical discussion of those issues; and translate good ideas into action through the support of community-based initiatives and task forces.

As a nonpartisan research and educational institute, LINKS is devoted to improving the quality of life for all of Scottsdale's citizens by identifying knowledge-based solutions to local policy questions.

Since its founding in 1993, LINKS has remained steadfast to its vision of Scottsdale as a safe, healthy and productive community where individuals can achieve their full potential. The LINKS process demonstrates how the interaction and collaboration among citizens, businesses, voluntary associations and government is the most effective means of community problem solving and discovering effective solutions that lead to sound economic growth, quality education, affordable health care and a clean environment.

### **CONTRIBUTORS**

Valerie Iverson, Primary Investigator  
Iverson Ideas

O.N.E. Scottsdale, A subcommittee of LINKS

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# O.N.E. Scottsdale

## Our Neighborhoods Enhanced, Scottsdale

*Restoring a sense of community*

**O.N.E. SCOTTSDALE is a subcommittee of LINKS that was formed to restore a sense of community and pride in Scottsdale**

- **By healing divisions;**
- **By promoting a collaborative spirit to develop and maintain partnerships;**
- **By fostering open and on-going communication;**
- **And, by enhancing and maintaining neighborhoods within the Scottsdale community.**

### **Vision**

O.N.E. Scottsdale's vision is for a sense of community to permeate Scottsdale marked by collaborative efforts and respectful communication among neighbors, businesses, and civic leaders; for property values to be protected through well-maintained and friendly neighborhoods and excellent schools; and for diverse people of all ages to feel safe and have pride in ownership.

### **History**

O.N.E. Scottsdale evolved from an idea of Pastor Bruce Johnson of Scottsdale Presbyterian Church and current president of the Interfaith Network of Scottsdale. Pastor Johnson and some of his colleagues felt that there needed to be aggressive community action to renew and preserve neighborhoods in the more mature areas of the city. He enlisted the help of Judy Crider, Executive Director of the LINKS, to facilitate meetings of individuals who shared a similar goal. From the initial conversation in October 2003, a LINKS subcommittee was started to champion revitalization efforts beginning with the historic Los Arcos Mall area. This subcommittee includes representatives from businesses such as real estate and financial institutions, the faith-based community, resident volunteers, and city staff.

### **Subcommittee Members**

Kathleen Hemmingsen, Katherine Weaver, Jobi Rosen, Sharon Oberitter, John Packham, Tammy Bosse, Bruce Johnson, Val Iverson, Judy Crider and Sharon Light-Stevenson



## Introduction

In the winter of 2006, Scottsdale held a Town Hall to garner community input into the future of the downtown corridor, particularly the land that encompasses the traditional city center. Several LINKS board members along with me were delegates. What we all observed during those intense meetings was the common denominator of a love for the culture that has separated Scottsdale from the surrounding communities. It is that unique brand and identity that made us all spend days in conversations and keeps us engaged in the civic debate about the future of our city. When Mayor Jim Lane identified the McDowell Corridor as the next focus area for the City of Scottsdale, LINKS asked Iverson Ideas to investigate this issue at the thirty thousand foot level and provide a perspective on how we might reinvent this historically significant section of Scottsdale.

The critical question is how do we determine the best way forward in addressing the needs of the residents and the business owners, while at the same time being mindful of the public interest in knitting this portion of the community into the city's general plan?

As a leader in non-partisan knowledge-based solutions, LINKS chose to address this issue in order to provide a platform to begin a serious discussion about approaches to revitalizing this major part of our community. Our commitment is to provide a level of objectivity that will allow the best solutions to arise by identifying the areas that need to be considered in order to produce the maximum benefit to all stakeholders. The core of our approach is that, in general, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to reinvigorating this sizeable area of Scottsdale. No government, business, network or partnership alone can devise a workable solution without cross-sector participation, support and innovation. Ultimately, we seek to foster a civil community dialogue leading to action on this significant issue.

Taking lessons from the planning field especially those from the "New Urbanism" movement originating in the 1800's, we acknowledge that we must respect the delicate balance between the private and public sector. When either sector carries too big of a stick, emotional reactions tend to cloud objectivity that is needed in making the decisions that will plot the course the city will travel for the foreseeable future.

We urge our readers to log onto our website: [www.linksforsolutions.org](http://www.linksforsolutions.org) and let us know your thoughts via our blog.

Judy Crider  
Executive Director



## **CONSIDERATIONS AS DISCUSSIONS TAKE PLACE ON THE FUTURE OF THE MCDOWELL ROAD CORRIDOR**

All parties to the process should already understand that reinvigorating the McDowell Road Corridor is a complex process that will take time. Property owners are understandably interested in protecting their investment. The City is interested in revitalization. All Scottsdale citizens have a stake in the outcome.

As a framework for ongoing conversations, LINKS believes that certain fundamental points should be acknowledged up front. These involve the physical, sometimes limiting features of the corridor's parcels, existing and forecast real estate market conditions, and the role of governmental regulations in encouraging or impeding redevelopment efforts.

### Property Considerations

- Dealership properties typically feature significant frontage and less depth. This configuration excludes or limits certain alternative uses unless more land is acquired through an assemblage.
- Owners of dealership properties typically paid top-of-the-market prices for land knowing that dealerships return higher-than-market-rate rents. Thus, unless distressed, there is little motivation for owners to offer deep discounts to developers (sale) or users (lease) focused on a different use.
- Dealership sales showrooms are atypically set back from the main road to accommodate automobile displays and the buildings themselves are difficult to convert to alternative uses.
- Some dealership sites might have been subjected to environmental contamination.
- Adjacent property owners as well as other stakeholders along the corridor have a vested interest in the revitalization of the area as well as the need for flexibility in reorienting their businesses to adjust to changing markets.

### Market Considerations

- Development activity is virtually at a standstill. The upside is that the City and property owners have time to address some issues that might impede redevelopment when the market stabilizes.
- Due to shifting demographics, freeway construction, and significant changes in the way that automobiles are marketed, the McDowell Road Corridor will never reemerge as a competitive site for selling new vehicles.
- Although recovery of sales tax dollars should interest the City in evaluating redevelopment proposals, major commercial development will be extremely limited by the number of competitive retail centers that have emerged recently within the same trade area.



- Even if developers come forward with interesting plans, actual implementation will be severely restricted for the foreseeable future by tight capital markets limiting access to loans.

#### Regulatory Considerations

- The City's primary role is pretty much restricted to creating an environment for successful redevelopment.
- Ambiguities in zoning regulations should be identified and corrected so that applications for changes are not subject to interpretation and every applicant is assured of being treated equally.
- The City's permitting process should be evaluated and, if necessary, streamlined to avoid unnecessary delays and confusion.
- The City should use the McDowell Road Corridor example to reevaluate zoning and signage regulations and restrictions on Frank Lloyd Wright Blvd. that might be placing undue stress on those dealerships which the City can ill-afford to lose.
- Some weight should be given to exploring the use of public/private partnerships and what adaptations to current City policy are needed for this to occur.

#### Process Considerations

- Ensure that all participants in the McDowell Road planning process are familiar with these and other considerations put forward that will limit available options, thus ensuring that ongoing discussions are firmly rooted in realistic possibilities.
- McDowell Road, as it changes, will develop more as segmented nodes than as a revitalized dominant use, single-themed corridor.
- Property owners, both large and small, should be recognized as the ultimate key players in the revitalization process.
- Removing obstacles to redevelopment is probably more important and effective at this time than providing incentives.



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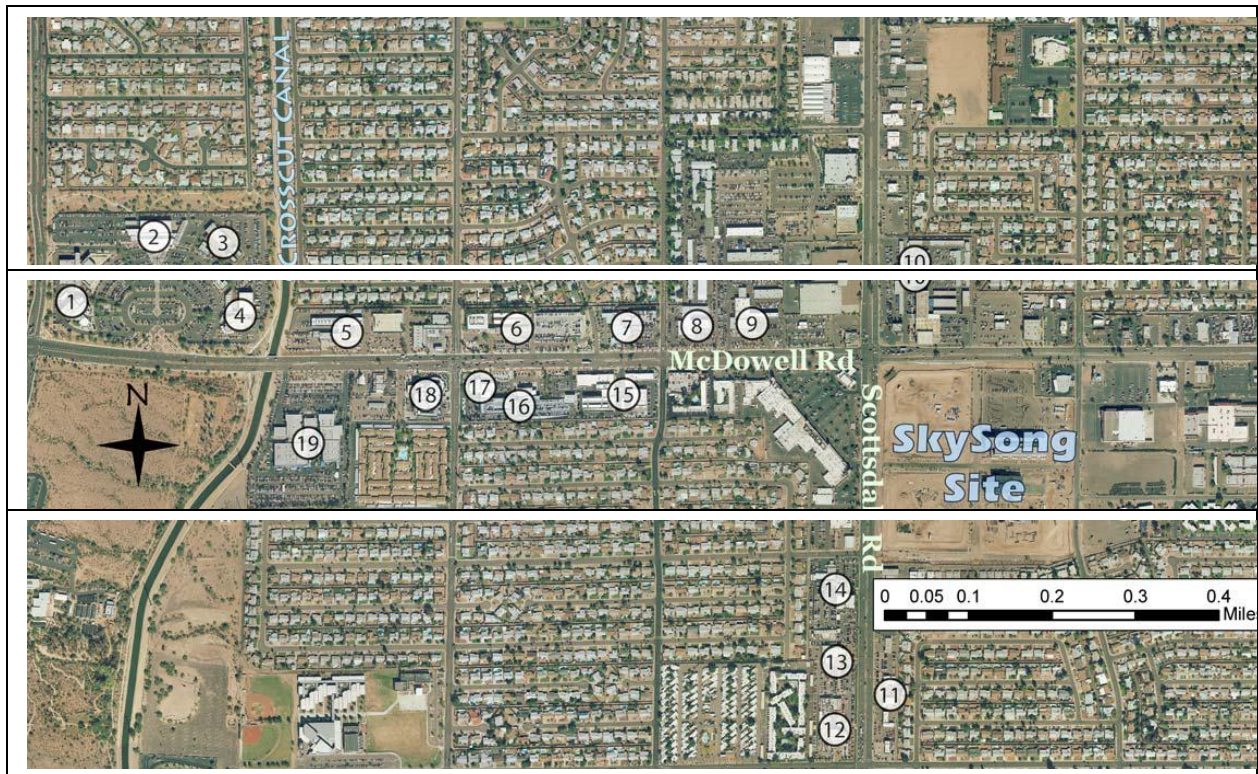
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## McDowell Corridor: Uncut Jewel of Scottsdale



### Key Name/ Address/ Owner

- 1 Power Subaru/ 6420 E McDowell Rd/ AutoNation
- 2 Power Chrysler/Jeep/ 6460 E McDowell Rd/ AutoNation
- 3 Power Isuzu/Hyundai/ 6480 E McDowell Rd/ AutoNation
- 4 Powell Volvo/ 6500 E McDowell Rd/ Stan Powell
- 5 Available 6640 E McDowell Rd/ AutoNation
- 6 Available 6850 E McDowell Rd -
- 7 Infiniti of Scottsdale/ 6910 E McDowell Rd/ Ken Schatzberg
- 8 Available 7000 E McDowell Rd -
- 9 Five Star Ford/ 7100 E McDowell Rd Dr./ Kenneth Scholz
- 10 Bill Heard Chevrolet - Service Site/ 7227 E McDowell Rd/ Bill Heard

- 11 Scottsdale Hummer/ 1101 N Scottsdale Rd /John Lund
- 12 Mark Kia /1000 N Scottsdale Rd/ Mark Debowy
- 13 Mark Mitsubishi/ 1000 N Scottsdale Rd /Mark Debowy
- 14 Kachina Cadillac/Hummer Saab/ 1200 N Scottsdale Rd/ John Lund
- 15 Scottsdale Lexus/ 6905 E McDowell Rd/ Penske
- 16 Scottsdale Aston Martin/ 6725 E McDowell Rd /Penske
- 17 Ferrari/Maserati Scottsdale/ 6825 E McDowell Rd/ Penske
- 18 Available/ 6725 E McDowell Rd / Penske
- 19 Chapman BMW/Dodge/Volkswagen/ 6601 E McDowell Rd/ Baxter Chapman
- 20 Available/ 8705 E McDowell Rd/ Bill Heard (not on map)

Photos: City of Scottsdale



### ***WHAT IS A LIVABLE COMMUNITY?***

Livable communities are vital neighborhoods that blend residences, shops, offices and other workplaces, parks, and entertainment with easy access to public transportation and an interconnected network of sidewalks and bike routes. They provide easier access to daily needs and a wide choice of ways to get around.

Livable communities makes it possible for communities to grow in ways that support economic development and jobs; create strong neighborhoods with a range of housing, commercial, and transportation options; and achieve healthy communities that provide families with a clean environment.

Livable communities preserve the best of the past while creating a bright future for generations to come. Revitalization efforts support the people who live and work there. Economic vitality is restored to neglected areas through a concerted community effort. People's concerns are aired openly as they assess impacts and address undue hardships while also keeping an eye to the future.

Livable communities are attractive, convenient, safe and healthy neighborhoods that create more choices for residents, workers, visitors, children, families, single people, and older adults for where to live, shop, work, play and get around.

The McDowell Corridor has great potential to reinvent itself as a livable community. Its older historic neighborhoods have a strong sense of ownership and community diversity. The area has improving public transportation and recent public infrastructure investment. It is bookended by two great outdoor amenities, Indian Bend Wash and Papago Park. It also has the seeds of becoming a new technology corridor anchored by General Dynamics Decisions Systems and Arizona State University's Skysong campus. Most importantly, the area has a great central location in the Valley with the Scottsdale brand.

The McDowell Corridor is experiencing birth pangs as it is in the midst of a transition from a thriving retail and automobile center to a technology and education corridor, connecting idea entrepreneurs from around the globe. During this transitional period, temporary businesses take advantage of reduced rents to move into the area awaiting the next ideation.

One of the major forces behind this change was the completion of the 101 Freeway loop in 2001. This redefined McDowell Road from the major connector between Scottsdale and Phoenix to one of many interior routes within the City of Scottsdale. This bypass effectively reduced customer frequency to the point that no business along the corridor is profitable. One of the by products of this massive business exodus and infrastructure changes in this area is that traditional neighborhoods





have lost their local shopping centers. As former businesses stand empty, the area has suffered from a perception that it is in decline and has been neglected.

But the McDowell Corridor's greatest strength is its people and its ideas. The area holds the entrepreneurial flame that must be fanned in a new direction by the city. By focusing on a vision of the McDowell Corridor as a Livable Community, the area can once again become a great place to live, shop, work, play and get around.





## **COMPONENTS OF A LIVABLE COMMUNITY**

### **LIVE**

Safe, comfortable, housing choices affordable to a wide range of people are a key element of a livable community. Changing population demographics require choices all along the housing ladder to meet a variety of needs.

Since the 1950s the average size of a house has doubled while the number of people per household has shrunk. While homes continue to be built for young married couples, this demographic group is expected to comprise less than 10% of new households formed between 2000 and 2015. Thirty years ago one in two households had children. By the year 2030, only one in five will include children. ([www.lgc.org](http://www.lgc.org))

Decreasing household sizes mean the number of new households will increase proportionately faster than the population. Household sizes are expected to decrease as a result of more single-person and single-parent households and fewer two-parent families with children. Assuming that real incomes will remain more or less the same, smaller households mean there will be less demand for large-lot, single-family homes and more demand for smaller, less expensive housing.

Formed in 2005, the Livable Communities Coalition unites 42 organizations working to change the way metro Atlanta grows by focusing on land use, transportation, housing, and conservation of open green space and natural resources. See [www.livablecommunitiescoalition.org](http://www.livablecommunitiescoalition.org).

The fastest growth in the population after 2010 will be among those over 65. While homeownership rates peak at about these ages, they soon begin to ebb as seniors with disabilities and widows shift increasingly towards rentals. By 2030—for the first time in the United States—one in five Americans will be elderly. Many older citizens will be unable or unwilling to drive or care for expansive back yards. ([www.jchs.harvard.edu](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu))

Although most seniors prefer to age in place, fully 39 percent of Americans do change residences after they reach the age of 60. At least four-fifths of the moves seniors make are local. ([www.jchs.harvard.edu](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu)).

The second fastest growing family type over the next 10 to 20 years will be single persons living alone, nearly half of whom rent. The largest generation of children below the age of 20 in the history of the US reaches adulthood from 2000-2020. In addition, the native-born population aged 0-19 in 2000 is the largest ever and will be aged 20-39 by 2020. As this population, born 1980-2000, is augmented by young adult immigrants arriving in the country over the next 10-15 years, the young adult population—the group most prone to rent multifamily apartments—is poised to set a record. ([www.jchs.harvard.edu](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu))



These two groups, frail seniors and young adults, along with a trend toward smaller household size means rethinking the best way to deliver housing to help young people just starting on the housing ladder and to meet the special housing needs of the growing number of seniors downsizing.

In addition, over and above demographic trends, to the extent that tighter mortgage standards persist into the future, less young renters will be able to make the transition to homeownership and those that defaulted will have a hard time returning to homeownership.

Fruitvale Village in Oakland, California is a successful national model for livable communities. The project grew out of the community's protest to a planned parking garage. Instead the 275,000 square foot village includes a retail plaza, senior center, health center and mixed income housing units. Combining the older Fruitvale neighborhood with the new Village produced a distinctive place for residents to shop, eat and rest in a safe and pleasant setting.  
(See [www.unitycouncil.org](http://www.unitycouncil.org)).



While the single-family detached home will remain the housing product of choice for many, demand is growing for greater alternatives in housing. Housing that can accommodate better walkability, access to transit, proximity to publicly maintained parks and civic spaces, and smaller housing units in familiar neighborhoods helps communities create more living options from which households can choose.

Multifamily housing is a critical rung on the housing ladder because it meets the housing needs of a range of different types of households. Demographic shifts will favor multifamily rental living. From those who

simply find renting more convenient, to those who cannot qualify for a mortgage loan to own a home, to those unprepared to take on the risks of owning a home, to those who have just moved to an area or plan to move again soon, to those who seek the services that are more economically provided in higher density settings (such as seniors), multifamily housing is a crucial option.

A range of housing choices can also ensure a better jobs-housing balance and generate a strong foundation of support for neighborhood transit stops, retail centers, and other services.

## SHOP

Through its separation of uses, conventional suburban development effectively severed retail from the community it served. Combined with a growing suburban reliance on roads and driving, suburban retailers have responded with increasingly larger retail formats spaced ever further apart. There is a physical disconnect between where one lives and where one shops.

A 3634 N. Drinkwater Blvd., Scottsdale, AZ 85251 P (480) 882-6579  
[www.linksforsolutions.org](http://www.linksforsolutions.org)

The Eighth and Pearl development in Boulder, Colorado is a model mixed-use project on a small parcel. The project includes retail, second-story offices, and residential townhouses on a site formerly occupied by a gas station. The stores and offices face the primary street, buffering the homes in back from street noise and creating a transition from a commercial street to a residential street.  
(See [www.epa.gov/smartgrowth](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth).)







One way some communities have addressed this issue is by encouraging development that blends housing and shops. A model for this is to increase density and height for a specific portion of a community, especially an area that no longer serves its original design intent. For example, in Baltimore, Maryland a vacant warehouse was given a new zoning designation that allowed investors working with the community to change the property into residential units that were quickly filled by teachers who worked in the nearby schools. The rezoning also brought about a resurgence of investment by local businesses in neighborhood markets, dry cleaners, and hairdressers to meet the needs of the growing residential population. With different types of uses within a walkable area, creative reuse of vacant buildings stimulates the growth of healthy neighborhoods in places that were once solely industrial.

These transitional neighborhoods or “livable communities” attract and support neighborhood stores on streets that are shopper friendly that provide a convenient location for quick purchases from a wide array of products, especially food. These small stores have convenient access and parking, and extended hours of operation. Livable communities also need shops that provide daily needs and personal services such as dry cleaning, barber shops, shoe repair, and well as restaurants, bookstores, and entertainment.

## WORK

Livable communities are a nice blend of residential and businesses which provide the ingredients needed to have strong, vibrant economies that encourage local enterprise, meet residents’ needs, and promote stable employment. Government, business, education, and the community work together to create a vital local economy, through a long-term investment strategy that focuses on long-term benefits and impacts on the whole community, not on short-term job or revenue increases.

The Legacy Town Center in Plano, Texas is a town center built in an exiting office park. Electronic Data Systems wanted to attract employees by creating a placed where workers can shop, eat, relax and run errands during lunch and after work. Employees walk to stores and restaurants and an apartment building offers housing choice for employees.  
(See [www.legacyinplano.com](http://www.legacyinplano.com).)



Economic development efforts help to create and preserve each community’s sense of uniqueness and history, and include public gathering places and a strong sense of place. And the new uses that come from a residential center provide the opportunity for micro businesses to pop up to meet the needs of the area. As marketers are fond of saying, “People go where people go,” and the reinvigoration of an area through a healthy balance of residences and businesses can bring an area back to life.



A local example of this phenomenon is found at 40<sup>th</sup> and Highland in Phoenix, Arizona. In the midst of a residential area, a 7/11 and dry cleaner existed to serve the needs of the neighbors. As a larger shopping center was developed a few blocks away, the business died out. One person saw this as an opportunity and opened up Le Grand Orange Grocery—an eatery, shop and pizzeria.

Through the creative reuse of existing buildings, one of the most vibrant places to meet and eat was developed. Not only was that a success for this enterprise, but several other small businesses opened behind it and across the street. What once was an aging area in decline, now boasts several restaurants and shops. (Just try and find a parking spot!) Another unexpected bonus of this vibrant shop is the purchase and rehabilitation of nearby homes.

As demonstrated by the Le Grande Orange, a community's most valuable assets are the ones they already have, like existing businesses, buildings, parks and neighborhoods. During any reinvestment activities these existing businesses should be given first priority as the best sources of business expansion and local job growth.



Local governments can support individuals seeking to create these quality places in their neighborhoods by using the tools available to cities in Arizona such as targeted area redevelopment; authorizing revitalization districts of commercial corridors to include mixes of businesses, shops, and homes; and streamlining permitting processes. These strategies aim to provide more convenience and choice for residents and employers and emphasize a bottom up way toward recapturing an area.

By using creative zoning that allows mixed uses of property, government can serve the community as an encourager to those who will quickly see entrepreneurial opportunities within the new zones. Micro businesses within existing neighborhoods as well as innovation in residential design energize an area of a community that has been limited in the past. Also when housing options are a part of revitalization efforts, the additional households can spur further business demand for services and shopping. It can also provide a ready workforce for expanded economic development opportunities.



## PLAY

Scottsdale residents have consistently supported the expansion and upkeep of city parks and recreation areas. Ball parks, soccer fields and golf courses are just a few of the amenities that garner widespread support. In rethinking the McDowell Corridor, residents of the area stress the need for open spaces and greenbelts as a part of the mix.

Livable communities nationally provide adequate public green spaces – parks, playgrounds, or greenways that follow a stream or walk/bike path – that are incorporated throughout communities and are interconnected. Ideally, no one is more than a short walk from a playground or park. This is part of the history of Scottsdale as well with the transformation of the Indian Bend Wash (a designated flood plain) into an interconnected park system spanning a significant portion of the community.

## GET AROUND

A key to a livable community is an efficient way to get around that includes multiple routes and types of transportation. The goal is to create a more balanced transportation system with a variety of transportation choices.

King Farm in Rockville, Maryland takes full advantage of transportation choices. The development operates private shuttle buses in a continuous loop to the area Metro station. Higher density for this transit-oriented development also reserved ¼ of the land for parks and open space. (See [www.kingfarm.com](http://www.kingfarm.com).)



Livable communities place denser development where it makes the most sense – near job and activity centers, essential services, and major transportation corridors, especially transit corridors. A smart mix of transit that makes connections between trolley, local bus service, express bus service, and regional light rail is available.

One fourth of all trips that people make are one mile or less, but three-fourths of these trips are made by car, in part a result of inhospitable pedestrian areas and a lack of other transportation options. Livable communities offer residents a choice of ways to get around inside their neighborhoods, between neighborhoods, and between home and work. This means providing options for those who can't own a car, for children and seniors who want more independence, and for people who

might want to drive to work one day and bike the next.

([www.livablecommunitiescoalition.org](http://www.livablecommunitiescoalition.org))





It is also important to incorporate bicycling and walking infrastructure into the neighborhood. Improved walkability has sizeable benefits for a community including improved fitness, cleaner air, and a greater sense of community. A walkable community has appropriate speeds, street widths, and sidewalks. When a community is designed to be easier to get around, people can more easily incorporate physical activity into their daily lives.

The League of American Bicyclists sponsors the Bicycle Friendly Community Campaign. The campaign is an awards program that recognizes municipalities that actively support bicycling. To see which communities are bike friendly, as well as the policies and amenities they have established, see the website to learn more: [www.bicyclefriendlycommunity.org](http://www.bicyclefriendlycommunity.org).

When more development is placed near transportation and more transportation alternatives are placed near the densest development, we expand choices. By having complete streets, streets that make walking, cycling and riding transit an attractive alternative to driving, we encourage walking and cycling for short trips. By building an efficient, interconnected grid of streets, we give drivers a choice of routes to take for every destination. By providing frequent, reliable public transportation, we provide alternatives for commuters and others traveling outside their neighborhoods.



**MCDOWELL CORRIDOR: YESTERDAY AND TODAY**

Back in the 1950s and 1960s McDowell Road was a major east/west thoroughfare, serving downtown Phoenix, Scottsdale, Tempe and Mesa. Scottsdale Road served as the only major north-south arterial to link with Paradise Valley to the north and Tempe to the south. In fact, the McDowell-Scottsdale roads corner was one of the busiest intersections in the state.

Motorola opened on Granite Reef and McDowell roads in 1957 and was instrumental in the development of southern Scottsdale's neighborhoods. Many high skilled workers moved to the area and by 1960, Scottsdale was the most affluent community in the state.

Development north and west of the canals that run through Scottsdale had the largest homes, with most exceeding 1,900 square feet. Homes south and east of the canals were more modest and more typical of postwar ranches built during that time. During this period Scottsdale made the transition from an agricultural and resort town to one of the premiere residential communities in the country.



During this time, auto dealers began locating along McDowell Road. This area became known as the Motor Mile. With the more recent addition of freeways and the shifts in population, automobile dealerships expanded to other locations with better visibility and access to freeways. Auto Malls developed in northern Scottsdale, Mesa, Tempe, Chandler and Gilbert. The McDowell Motor Mile's competitive locational advantage declined significantly and in the past year many auto dealers have relocated to areas along the

Freeway Corridor. Current difficulties within the automotive industry specifically General Motors and Chrysler portend additional dealer closures in the second and third quarters of 2009.

This exodus of auto dealers has had a significant negative impact on the city's revenues. The 2008 City of Scottsdale Annual Financial Trends report states that sales tax from auto sales dropped 12.4% for 2008. The trend continues to worsen. According to a Scottsdale Republic article on 4/29/09, Scottsdale's automobile sales tax revenue declined 41% in the past year from \$1.86 million in March 2008 to \$1.1 million in March 2009. This loss of sales tax revenue is one factor to be considered in future decisions concerning the area.

In 1969 Los Arcos Mall opened on the McDowell Road-Scottsdale Road intersection. The period of the 70s and 80s the area was a vibrant retail core with customers drawn to the area from the major corridor for automobiles but also for the shopping



experience of the mall which was anchored by Sears and Broadway. Los Arcos steadily declined during the 1990's, partially because of age, competition to the north in the Scottsdale Fashion Square and an economic downturn in southern Scottsdale as the city expanded rapidly towards the north.

This mall was torn down in 2000 and is now the location of SkySong, a mixed-use project consisting of 1.2 million square feet of office, research and retail space. Future plans include apartment units, a hotel and a conference center. SkySong is anchored by a gigantic shade structure. Its goal is to connect business, innovation and technology through its partnership with Arizona State University. Its goal is to attract knowledge workers and companies worldwide, with a special focus on start-up companies. ASU will also occupy a portion of the space with its research units. When built out, it will include around 600,000 square feet of office space.



According to a Gruen Gruen + Associates 2007 study of the retail and office market, southern Scottsdale's office market is a distinct submarket. Excluding SkySong, the older, smaller, less expensive office space located in this area does not lend itself to large-scale corporate and professional services users. The quality and features of newer office space in the rest of the city creates functional obsolescence in southern Scottsdale office space making it harder to compete with downtown Scottsdale to the north or Tempe to the south. However, southern Scottsdale office space does capture those tenants priced out of these adjacent areas.

SkySong should improve the image of southern Scottsdale for renting office space. GG+A predicts SkySong will capture most of the future office demand in southern Scottsdale and that there will be a surplus of office space by 2020.

Today, the southern Scottsdale retail market consists of many smaller, older, obsolete, unanchored retail centers. As population has shifted to areas further from the core of the metro area, retail development has followed. Southern Scottsdale retailers have faced increasing competition from new major retail centers in Tempe and Mesa. The GG+A study estimates the current supply of community, power, and regional center space exceeds retail demand in southern Scottsdale. They predict the southern Scottsdale retail market will be intensely





competitive in the future and that any new retail sales will siphon off sales from existing centers.

Given the recent economic downturn, retailers will be even more conservative with their expansion plans, booking more store closures and fewer openings. There may be higher vacancies and softer rental rates in retail in the near future. This may lead to more abandoned shopping centers, also known as greyfields.

The McDowell Corridor is a connector between two areas of recreational open space, Papago Park and Indian Bend Wash. Although located in Phoenix and Tempe, the 1,400 acre Papago Park is home to the Phoenix Zoo, the Desert Botanical Garden, The Arizona Historical Museum, Arizona Military Museum, Pueblo Grand Museum, Governor Hunt's Tomb and the Hole-in-the-Rock. Phoenix, Tempe, and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community are working together to take advantage of this potential park, starting with the preparation of a master plan.

The Indian Bend Wash Greenbelt is a multi-use pathway and park system. Completed in 1999, the greenbelt was constructed as a method of flood control. It runs 7.5 miles and connects five parks: Vista Del Camino, Eldorado, Indian School, Camelback and Chaparral. The linear design of turf and concrete pathways makes it a hot spot for rollerblading, jogging, walking and bike riding. Area amenities include sports fields, picnic ramadas, fishing lakes, and tennis courts.

Anchoring the east side of McDowell Corridor is the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. The Indian Community has created many successful economic development efforts including a golf course, a sand and grave operation, a solid waste facility, Scottsdale Pavilions, a 1.1 million square foot retail power center, and a Wal-Mart. More recently, the Community has focused on commercial and office development along the 8-mile 101 Pima Freeway.

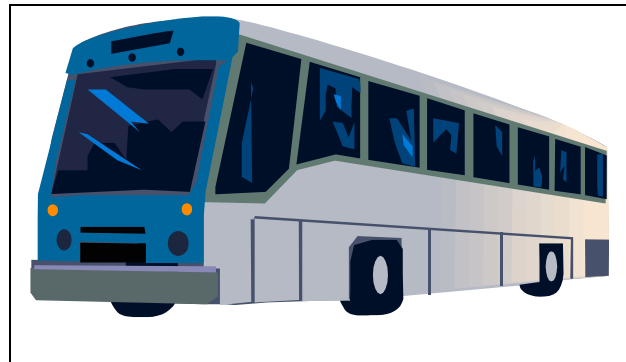
The McDowell Corridor area is served by many public transit routes. The Neighborhood Circulator is a free public trolley tying neighborhoods together between the Granite Reef Senior Center and Scottsdale's downtown. Valley Metro bus Route 17 runs east-west across McDowell Road from 83<sup>rd</sup> Ave, to Granite Reef Road; Route 72 runs north-south along Scottsdale Road from Mayo Boulevard to Chandler Fashion Center. Route 72 also connects to the University Drive/Rural Transit Center, a Valley Metro Light Rail stop.

The McDowell Road Streetscape Project recently improved landscaping and pedestrian areas along McDowell Road from 64<sup>th</sup> Street to Pima Road. The bus stops were improved with seatwalls, landscaping and transit amenities and landscaping included clusters of trees and shrubs. Most of the work has been completed with the exception of the corridor between Scottsdale Road and Indian Bend Wash.



Currently in the design phase, the Scottsdale Road Streetscape plans to acquire, preserve and restore desert land along Scottsdale Road, and design and enhance portions of Scottsdale Road to reflect its significance in our desert community. It will integrate a "signature" streetscape design that will enhance the aesthetic of the road. Phase I will improve the pedestrian environment, add bicycle lanes and improve transit connections and amenities along Scottsdale Road between McKellips Road and Osborn Road. The improvements will be developed as a second phase of the Scottsdale Road Preservation Streetscape Enhancement Bond 2000 project and are planned to include landscaping and shade, site furnishings, pedestrian lighting and crosswalk treatments.

The ASU Scottsdale Center Transit Passenger Facility is planned for the Scottsdale/McDowell Road intersection. This transit passenger facility at SkySong will include shaded areas, drinking fountains, and information kiosks.





## ***THE COMMUNITY'S VISION***

Although still a work in progress the City of Scottsdale's community visioning process for the Southern Scottsdale Community Area Plan has uncovered a number of priorities within the community as outlined in *Southern Scottsdale Community Area Plan: Vision Themes and Priorities Workshop Summary*.

### **Develop a Strong Economic Core with Community Gathering Places**

Southern Scottsdale's economic centers should be upgraded and revitalized. Economic development should strive to retain small and local businesses that serve the area's residents and visitors, as well as enhance itself as a destination location and stand out as a regional attraction. As economic development occurs in southern Scottsdale, new development and redevelopment should create areas where people can both shop and gather. Opportunities for these gathering spaces could include the neighborhood corner store, coffee shop, public plazas, and open space. These gathering places can help to develop and promote the community identity, through community events, community partnerships, and cultural diversity.

### **Sustained Growth**

In order to address southern Scottsdale's growth, the City should encourage redevelopment of this area by considering a flexible zoning overlay to allow for innovative uses of existing structures and infill areas. This can be accomplished by a variety of tools which could also include covenants between existing property holders. This flexibility would provide opportunities for diverse designs that balance a mix of height, density, and distribution of traffic. This should be accomplished through focusing growth on major arterials, while preserving and maintaining established residential neighborhoods and open space recreation. In addition, Southern Scottsdale should retain and encourage a variety in housing options including both rental and for sale properties.

### **Focus on Local Mobility and Walkability**

Southern Scottsdale should continue to develop a well-connected and integrated transportation system by creating inter-modal connections with trolley, bus, bicycle, pedestrian, and auto. By strengthening the connectivity between these modes of transportation, the increased movement and flow would benefit many facets of Southern Scottsdale. Additionally, the traveling conditions should be improved for user comfort and appeal, including providing more shade, pedestrian friendly streetscapes and amenities, bus shelters and pullouts, and creating a more effective traffic flow.





### **Promote Well Designed Architecture and Sustainability**

As Southern Scottsdale reemerges, new and rehabilitated building designs should be contextually compatible with surrounding architecture. These buildings would have a sense of continuity by using design guidelines and standards while being of high quality. Rehabilitated buildings should protect the historic heritage of Southern Scottsdale. Additionally, new architecture should include historic character and preservation including the 1950's and 60's style single-family housing and the desert setting, while incorporating new innovation in design including green building (through the City's Green Building Program), energy conservation, native landscaping, and xeriscaping.

### **Promote the Brand**

By promoting a unifying McDowell Corridor brand, companies and individuals can picture themselves being part of the community. They will have a clear idea of how they fit into the area as well as an understanding of established customs for the community. Along with architectural requirements details such as signage and set backs should be clarified in phase one of any permitting process.



## ***TOOLS FOR REINVENTING A MORE LIVABLE COMMUNITY***

There are several tools that have been used across the country to create more livable communities. A few of those that could help the McDowell Corridor are reviewed below.

### **MIXED USE**

Mixing land uses—commercial, residential, recreational, educational, and others—in neighborhoods or places that are accessible by bike and foot can create vibrant and diverse communities.

In many communities, current development patterns mandate a separation of land uses. While the separation of land uses was originally intended to protect

PolicyLink, a nonprofit research and communications organization, offers the Equitable Development Toolkit, an Internet-based community resource, to help community leaders achieve equitable development: diverse, mixed-income neighborhoods that are strong, stable, and welcoming to all. For more information, see <http://www.policylink.org/EquitableDevelopment>.

communities from polluting industries and businesses, it has led to a pattern of land development in which stores, housing, and schools are often placed so far apart that they can be reached only by car.

Livable communities support the integration of mixed land uses into communities as a critical component of achieving better places to live.

When homes are located within walking distance to grocery stores or quality employment centers, alternatives to driving—such as walking or biking—once again become viable, thereby enabling more people to take advantage of this convenient lifestyle. A mix of land uses also provides a more diverse and sizable population and a wider base to support public transit and retail activities. Mixed land use can enhance the vitality and perceived security of an area by increasing the number of people on the street. Furthermore, a mix of land uses helps streets, public spaces and retail stores again become places where people meet, thus helping to revitalize community life.

### **DENSITY**

Communities that allow only low-density development limit housing choices and may drive up housing costs. By balancing lower, medium and higher-density projects, communities can offer a wider range of housing types. In addition, areas of more intense development can help achieve local economic development goals, preserve open spaces, create walkable neighborhoods, and improve a sense of community.





In contrast to conventional development in which housing tends to be similar in style and size, higher density projects can provide townhouses, apartments, accessory units and even live-work spaces to accommodate a broader range of lifestyles.

This greater range of housing types expands housing choices within a neighborhood. This allows residents to choose housing that meets their changing needs and preferences over their lifetime. Also more housing choices at different price points may increase affordability. Higher densities mean less land per unit, reduced site preparation, and lower per unit infrastructure costs – all factors that can reduce the hard costs of construction and expand reasonably priced housing.

Part of the challenge of making a neighborhood genuinely walkable is providing attractive destinations nearby, such as shops or restaurants. However, ensuring that those places are both walkable and economically viable requires density. Retail destinations located within a short walk of residences typically include markets, cafes, dry cleaners and convenience stores, all of which depend upon pedestrian traffic for their customer base. Density also creates more viable retail markets as stores of convenience such as supermarkets and drug stores look to locate in higher population areas.

Density also increases transportation choice by providing the ridership needed to make public transit a viable and competitive transportation option.

A more balanced perspective changes the discussion from “Should we have density?” to “What should the density look like and how should we create it?” The discussion invites citizens to think about designing great places, rather than just thinking about density.

Communities should ask several questions related to increasing densities. Where are the best places in our community for density? Is there an opportunity to redevelop an area between two neighborhoods? How can we change the zoning for these selected areas to encourage development at higher densities? How will the dense development be integrated with the neighborhood? Are there old vacant or underperforming shopping centers or other properties that could be converted into denser neighborhoods?

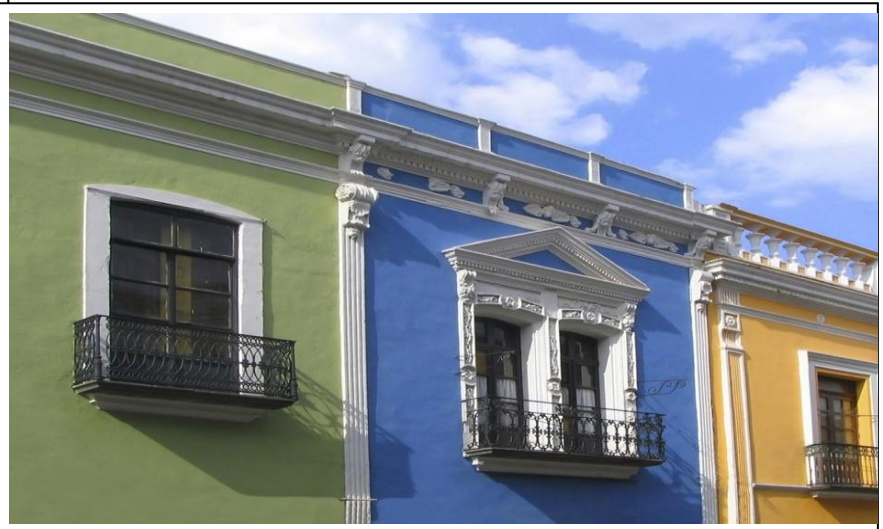
## **ZONING**

Zoning is the most common method for controlling land uses. It can encourage or discourage development—type, size, location. Comprehensive plans lay out the general objectives for municipal land use but it is the zoning map that designates which parcels can be used for which particular purpose.



In most communities, local zoning ordinances for new or infill development prohibit the mixing of land uses, which limit the location of public and private services within walking distance of home, work, and transit. Zoning codes often offer limited alternatives to detached housing and apartment complexes.

Communities can make sure local zoning codes allow a wide range of housing types and prices and break down barriers that prevent choice, including development restrictions that prohibit multifamily housing or mandate minimum lot and house sizes. Universal design that allows people, if they choose, to age in place and remain in a home that reflects their changing physical capabilities should be encouraged.





### **Overlay Zones**

Mixed use overlay zones—which permit a special application of land use and building design standards in a targeted area—create smart communities when they are implemented along with complimentary design guidelines

In general, mixed-use overlay zones are used to create standards that allow cities to streamline the entitlement process. Property owners within the boundaries have the option of utilizing the underlying zoning on their property, which will remain intact, or they can opt to go with the new zoning and build a mixed-use or multi-family project on their property. They offer guidelines and standards that ensure that these mixed uses respond to a framework of good design principles. At the same time, developers have more flexibility and ease in getting their projects approved.

### **Special Districts**

The purpose of a Special Development District is to permit and encourage variety and flexibility in land use that will enhance an area's development. A Special District is an overlay zone which allows approval of a proposed project which may not otherwise have been permitted in the particular zone in which it is located. In order for this approval to be granted, certain standards must be met.

The designation of Special Districts is a convenient means to organize and focus investment in a particular area to achieve a range of outcomes, such as historic preservation, business improvement, or economic revitalization. It provides an opportunity for local or other special purpose governments to establish clear boundaries and names for geographic areas with which residents and businesses can better identify. By strengthening the sense of community in these areas, citizens can become more involved in development decisions about their own district and the region of which it is a part.

### **Planned Unit Developments**

PUDs allow planners to evaluate the nature and location of uses and buildings on an entire site which provides flexibility in zoning requirements. Rather than simply placing businesses or houses on a site, the property owner or developer must come in with a unified plan describing how the elements of the site will fit together and fit into the surroundings. A PUD can allow for mixed use projects. Since traditional zoning districts require strict separation of uses, without the PUD, many creative projects would require a number of variances, if they could be accomplished at all.

The Scottsdale's City Council adopted a free standing PUD to allow mixed commercial and residential uses with increased intensities and densities. The infill sites of up to 15 acres must be located on arterial and major collector streets. Allowable heights were limited to 48 feet.



### **Flex Zoning**

Flex zoning is an alternative approach that encourages a better mix of uses by limiting regulation to building type and allowing building owners to determine the uses. As such, the look and layout of a street is carefully controlled to reflect neighborhood scale, parking standards, and pedestrian accessibility, but building owners and occupants are allowed maximum flexibility to determine how the buildings will be used.

Flex zoning permits the developer or building owner to change the use of the building (assuming that building codes are met for the new use) without undergoing a lengthy variance or approval process. As a result, buildings are better able to capitalize on fluctuating market demands and can accommodate retail, office, or residential space as needed. In conjunction with zoning by building type and mass, zoning for flexible uses creates a neighborhood feel by managing the look of the building, while also providing opportunities for dynamic retail change and small business development within. Flex zoning also allows developers or building owners to adapt to market changes and thus make their units more profitable.

### **Cottage House Zoning**

A cottage housing development is an alternative type of detached housing providing small residences for households of typically one to two individuals. A cottage housing development zoning ordinance allows detached homes at higher residential density through the use of smaller than average home sizes, clustered parking and design standards. The cottage housing development design standards are intended to create a small community of cottages oriented around open space that is pedestrian-oriented and minimizes the visibility of off-street parking.

### **Cluster Zoning**

Some communities support cluster development where homes are built at the same gross densities as conventional development but concentrate development on smaller lots in a portion of the property and keep a portion as open space. This yields the same number of units but leaves undeveloped property as open space reducing grading, infrastructure, and site preparation and thereby costs.

### **Home-Based Businesses**

Changes in zoning designations can be engines for economic development. In the case of home-based businesses and home occupations, changes in zoning codes can allow non-nuisance home industry to generate economic activity in residential areas. Zoning changes could accommodate live-work units that permit the creation of living spaces in commercial zones, or the commercial use of a residential home.



## LIVE OPTIONS

In developing a housing strategy, communities should look to a variety of housing types to meet the range of housing alternatives people prefer. Encouragingly new hybrid housing types, which utilize some characteristics of single family housing with the advantage of increased convenience and affordability, have evolved in the past decade. The following are some housing types that could be considered.

### Mixed-use housing above retail

Traditional neighborhoods and business areas often contain housing on the upper floors of retail establishments, or they mix apartments and shops on the same street. In districts where pedestrian access is a goal, it is still a good strategy to provide these types of housing.

The American Planning Association's report *Regional Approaches to Affordable Housing* examines the results achieved to date in the regions or areas of the country where equity in housing opportunity is a planning priority. For more information, visit [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

### Live-work units

Before zoning existed, people often conducted work from their homes, sometimes complete with a separate entrance and discreet signage. This traditional housing type recently has been rediscovered and is now known as a live-work unit. A live-work space combines personal living space and professional workspace in such a way that neither is compromised. The predominant use of a live/work unit is residential, and commercial activity is a secondary use; employees and walk-in trade are not usually permitted.

Americans have a long history of starting their own businesses at home. Small businesses are the principal source of new jobs in the US. This type of arrangement is what most people think of when they hear the term "working at home". The space is clearly a residence, and may or may not contain a workspace, typically in the form of an office or workshop. Many home based businesses can start in live/work units.

The Affordable Housing Design Advisor is a tool produced by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. It helps the developers, sponsors, and users of affordable housing understand what constitutes quality design, why it is worth striving for, and how to achieve it in their own projects. For more information, see <http://www.designadvisor.org>.

One of the most common uses for a live-work space is an artist's studio. In fact, many live-work spaces in major cities are marketed specifically towards professional artists. A properly designed live-work space provides the artist with the amenities of a home and the open studio space necessary to create and store finished works securely.



**Cooperatives and land trusts**

Beyond the traditional condominium approach to ownership in multifamily or attached housing developments, co-operatives (in which members own shares in the overall ownership structure and the right to occupy their unit) and community land trusts (in which a nonprofit trust owns the land, and the resident owner retains title to the house) represent additional, and at times more affordable, approaches to home ownership. These various ownership structures lend themselves to further broadening the range of affordability through inclusion of limited equity components which keeps the housing affordable for future purchasers. Depending on the structure, these equity limitations provide a fixed return on investment or limit the sales price based on moderate income levels for households. The challenge is finding a balance to allow the participants to build enough equity to later afford a non-subsidized home, while also preserving affordability.

East Lake Commons, less than 5 miles from downtown Atlanta, Georgia, is a co-housing development of 67 homes clustered around pedestrian paths with parking on the periphery. Preserved open space accommodates an organic garden and a small orchard. (See [www.eastlakecommons.org](http://www.eastlakecommons.org))

**Cottage housing**

Cottage houses are single-family detached units, usually less than 1,000 square feet in size, that incorporate many of the amenities associated with conventional single-family detached housing. Because of the style and size of cottage houses, developers can cluster cottage housing onto smaller parcels of land without sacrificing the feel and character of detached housing.

**Transit oriented development**

A transit-oriented development (TOD) is a mixed use residential/commercial area designed to maximize access to public transportation and often incorporates features to encourage transit ridership. A TOD neighborhood typically has a center with a train station or bus station surrounded by relatively higher density development with progressively lower-density development spreading outwards from the center. TODs generally are located within a radius of one-quarter to one-half mile from a transit stop, as this is considered to be an appropriate scale for pedestrians.

TODs put transit stops at the center of communities, so that housing, offices, and shops are all within walking distance. People have more opportunities to live or work near a bus or train, and to run errands, on foot, on their way to or from the bus and train.



## **ACCESSABLE NEIGHBORHOODS**

Sometimes conventional land use planning and design creates barriers to walking. In many cases it's unpleasant and dangerous to try to walk from work to a restaurant or from home to school. Not only does this force a reliance on the automobile for routine daily travel, it denies residents and workers the important health benefits of regular walking.

Long blocks of wide, unshaded streets with no medians are unappealing to pedestrians and encourage cars to speed. In the summer, these streets are hot.

Changes can be made to encourage walkability and shift the focus from cars to residents and neighborhoods. Mid block crossings make walking more efficient and convenient between destinations. Adding and or enhancing street medians make it more pleasant and safe to cross the street. Lastly, narrow shaded streets slow down the cars and are much cooler, making walking much more pleasant.

Streets should be designed not only to move cars but also to be safe and inviting for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. Such design means appropriate speeds, widths, and sidewalks, as well as, trees and even benches. Often, communities already have the basic infrastructure for people to get around without a car; they just need to make a few improvements so that it's easier and more comfortable.

## **STREAMLINED REVIEW**

In recent times, development review has become increasingly complex and time consuming. The aim of streamlining is to reduce application review times and increase certainty and predictability in the permitting process creating a customer driven process which reduces project costs.

There are a number of tools that can be used to achieve streamlining. A single project manager can be responsible for coordinating review process. Centralized permitting provides one stop shopping for permitting in one location. A scorecard can be used where applications are assigned scores based on how well they meet community policies and goals. Applications scoring above a threshold value are given priority review. Fast track or expedited processing can be offered for certain categories of construction projects.

Prompt, thorough review of proposed livable community projects and the timely issuance of permits can reduce the holding cost of land for developers and make developments more attractive. One-stop shops, developer liaisons, priority review, and review deadlines are just a few ways communities can focus their review resources on projects they want to encourage.



## GREYFIELD REUSE

Cities throughout the United States are grappling with how best to redevelop abandoned commercial sites where strip centers once stood. These sites, known as greyfields, were once the center of retail activity and a significant revenue-generating asset for cities. Now they account for a significant source of abandonment, vacancy, commercial disinvestment, and job and revenue loss.

As strip retail centers become obsolete, communities can explore ways to reuse the space as mixed-use developments. These greyfields constitute prime opportunities for infill development. Left untouched, these greyfields contribute to the disinvestment and decline of the surrounding community.

Resources exist to aid communities in putting greyfields to full and profitable use as mixed use centers. The Urban Land Institute provides guidance on redeveloping commercial strips. See [www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org).

Recycling these valuable sites helps a community capitalize on their advantages: access to a ready market; working water, sewer, and road infrastructure; and proximity to transit and existing transportation networks.

Rezoning existing commercial strips to require taller buildings on the street rather than behind large parking lots is a good start for rebuilding declining commercial strips into livable communities. Not only does this strategy transform inhospitable pedestrian environments, but it also creates more space for office, residential, and retail uses. When more people and uses are drawn to an area, they create a pleasant, walkable environment that offers a sense of place and increases demand for more stores, restaurants, offices, and homes.

## FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

A façade improvement program helps property owners and businesses with upgrading building exteriors with technical and financial assistance. Façade improvement programs are typically part of a broader revitalization strategy for an area. Some neighborhoods have buildings with significant deferred maintenance and disinvestment. The building owners may need assistance with coordinating building upgrades.

Cities implementing a facade improvement programs help evaluate interest in facade improvements with property and business owners in the area. Often a point person coordinates the application process and regulatory procedures, helps with design concepts and provides other technical assistance. Some programs provide grants. The program can be used for exterior improvements such as signage, lighting, painting, windows and awnings.





## TARGETED AREA REDEVELOPMENT

Parcel by parcel redevelopment can be a slow process and a tough sell. Assembling contiguous parcels of underutilized, vacant or blighted property for redevelopment as a district can accelerate and encourage investment in an area. Area redevelopment creates a marketable real estate opportunity. Existing infrastructure, proximity to employment, and access to transit are factors that make land assembly projects attractive to developers, businesses and residents.

## GRANTS AND AWARDS

Many communities offer awards to developers that do an outstanding job on livable community initiatives. Special funding for implementing livable communities programs can be provided that tie together social, housing, environmental, and economic issues with smart land use. An award program could be used to highlight successful examples interested in transforming single-purpose sites into mixed-use centers.

## PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Public-private partnerships are joint efforts between public and either private for-profit or the private nonprofit sector. In regards to sustainable affordable housing, neither the pure private sector nor the pure public sector has been successful. Today's high land cost makes affordable housing difficult to produce. A combination of public support with a private developer has created successful housing for our workforce for the past 20 years.

Typically the public jurisdiction offers something as a commitment, such as available land as a donation or below market price or a below market long-term land lease, to a developer in exchange for below market rate housing. The private partner finances, develops and manages the project.

Mendocino County created a public-private partnership to develop a 30 unit mixed income project on an abandoned DOT staging site.

### Private Developer Responsibilities

- construction
- project management
- secure financing
- provide guarantees
- property management

### Mendocino County Responsibilities

- below-market long-term lease of county owned land
  - waiver of fees
  - mapping and rezoning of site
- (See [www.co.mendocino.ca.us](http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us).)

Some jurisdictions establish community development corporations to foster public-private partnerships. CDCs usually serve a geographic location and focus on serving lower-income residents or struggling neighborhoods. They can be involved in a variety of activities including economic development and real estate development and often focus on affordable housing.



Additional public/private partnerships could come from a review of what infrastructure projects in the area need to be done and which projects could be done by private companies. Not only would the projects be done quickly, but vital revenue for the city's essential services could come from the sale or lease of certain infrastructure projects.



## ***PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER FOR THE MCDOWELL CORRIDOR: A LIVABLE COMMUNITY***

The McDowell Corridor has many attributes that make the area poised to become a truly livable community. The area is in a locational vortex that is adjacent to the cities of Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa and is located halfway between downtown Scottsdale and downtown Tempe. There is easy access to major freeways (Loop 101 and Loop 202 Red Mountain Freeway). Bus and trolley routes traverse the area and connect to the new Valley Metro Light Rail.

There are several walkable neighborhood schools including the recently rebuilt Supai Middle School and Coronado High School. The established neighborhoods have access to two beautiful, but totally different parks, Indian Bend Wash and Papago Park. The area has a mix of housing types with 70% ownership and 30% rental.

"We need to take a holistic approach to reinvestment in the area. We need to find ways to connect everything together, not just do individual projects."  
Harold Stewart, City of Scottsdale Economic Vitality Department

In a recent article in the Phoenix Business Journal, "Scottsdale Motor Mile Plagued by Closures," Certified Turnaround Professional Tom Vivaldelli said four major constraints face redevelopment along the corridor: 1) finding capital 2) the economy 3) occupant perception of the area and 4) local demand. Several actions could act as a catalyst for reinvestment in the McDowell Corridor. Vivaldelli contests that this is the best time to make the investment in the area. With a mix of zoning and planning changes along with working to attract new businesses, the area can become a magnet for new companies that offer highly skilled jobs to the region.

**Make a commitment to the area.** Successful reinvestment strategies usually require the public sector to take the primary leadership role and the initiative before the private sector is willing to commit time and money to an area. In addition, public leadership is needed not only as an area is being developed, but throughout the life span of the reinvestment activity. The city should create an accelerated process that provides much more certainty for developers. The city should seek out developers who have experience and demonstrated ability and willingness to produce quality projects. A true partnering between city and developer during the approvals phase would make good development in reinvestment areas easier and more predictable.

"Think of downtown Scottsdale and downtown Tempe as two ends of a barbell. The barbell is the McDowell/Scottsdale Corridor. This connector is the next economic opportunity."  
Ed Gawf, G & G Consulting

The city could assign a staff person to act as the marshal for the area. The marshal can stimulate and support collaborations among current property owners who wish to capitalize on their properties, spearhead marketing campaigns and activities to



bring awareness to the area and act as a one-stop shop for all development questions.

**Create a brand for McDowell Corridor.** Branding is the process of using marketing messages to create loyalty for a certain product or service based on a set of distinct benefits and a clearly communicated position in the marketplace.

Ultimately, a place must find those one or two things that are unique, compelling, authentic and believable enough to cause people to choose it over all those other increasingly compelling options. Defining the McDowell Corridor with a marketable brand so that people can identify the area would go a long way towards encouraging reinvestment. A brand could unite the community behind a single marketing message and build a positive perception of the area as a good place to live, work, shop and play. A brand could improve people's perception of the area and promote a stronger self image.

"The McDowell Corridor is in a great location. It should act as a gateway and create a sense of place."  
Rick Kidder, Scottsdale Area Chamber of Commerce

Several ideas for focusing the strengths of the area on a specific brand have percolated from the community. **A Health and Fitness Village** has been suggested by Larry Lazarus, Lazarus and Associates. Taking advantage of proximity to Papago Park, a health and Fitness Village would focus on active lifestyles, fitness, physical activity and sports. An elite athletic training center could be located in the area. Narrowing McDowell Road would create a healthy, walkable urban environment where people live, work and play. Similar to the Motor Mile where auto companies located in proximity to each other to create a synergistic destination point, industries associated with sports, fitness and health could locate in one area. A Fitness Village could also take advantage of collaborative projects with Scottsdale Healthcare and build upon Fit City Scottsdale initiative.

Others have suggested a **Green Community** that focuses on green technology. The new LEED gold certified Granite Reef Senior Center is located on the corner of McDowell and Granite Reef roads. This building is the first green certified city facility under the City of Scottsdale Scottsdale's Green Building Program and is the first green certified Senior Center in the State of Arizona. The Green Building Program encourages a whole-systems approach through design and building techniques to minimize environmental impact and reduce the energy consumption of buildings while contributing to the health of its occupants. Granite Reef Senior Center could serve as an anchor to the area and capitalize on Scottsdale's reputation as a green community. Industry related to solar energy, green technologies and sustainable practices could locate in the area. The area could capitalize on ASU's Global Institute of Sustainability.

Another focus is a **21<sup>st</sup> Century Business Park** that focuses on business incubation and cottage industries. This park would capitalize on SkySong and its access to the resources of Arizona State University. SkySong is designed to act as a



global focal point where technological innovations become commercial businesses. ASU calls Sky Song “an innovation center where large and small enterprises from around the world collaborate with a broad variety of research, business, innovation and entrepreneurial units from ASU.”

These ideas all focus on a unique strength of the McDowell Corridor area and make it a compelling reason for people to come to the area.

**Encourage mixed-use development.** Projects that blends housing, offices and shops ensures that at least some workers have the opportunity to cut commute times and expenses.

Mixed use development makes housing part of the larger community by putting it near places people need or want to go, including schools, work places, grocery stores, parks, and playgrounds. Mixed use puts housing within walking distance of daily destinations and offer easy access to transit.

“Increased residential uses, including multi-family apartments, should have great appeal to Scottsdale Healthcare and other major employers and the talented labor force they need.”  
Gruen Gruen + Associates

Reducing smaller, older, obsolete centers by combining adjoining properties will help to create mixed use developments with stronger retail. More compact retail formats will attract smaller grocery stores, such as Fresh & Easy” that are a boon to communities trying to develop walkable neighborhoods with convenient shopping nearby.

Differentiated office space including smaller spaces oriented to smaller occupants or live-work spaces would complement SkySong and benefit from spill over effect of research oriented office.

**Encourage a variety of housing choices.** New housing choices should be attractive to people with a range of incomes, lifestyles and needs and include stand-alone single-family homes, condominiums, flats, townhomes, and apartments. Breaking down barriers that prevent choice, including restrictions that prohibit multifamily housing or mandate minimum lot and house sizes ensure housing is available to all levels of the workforce. Local zoning codes should allow a wide range of housing types and prices, including owned and rental housing that are affordable to local workers, families and seniors.

“According to our surveys, the top 3 needs of Scottsdale seniors are affordable housing, transportation, and accessible services.”  
Tim Miluk, Granite Reef Senior Center

Smaller, older, obsolete retail, including unoccupied car dealerships, could be converted to higher density residential uses to increase demand for retail and restaurants and provide workers for businesses including SkySong, Scottsdale



Healthcare, City of Scottsdale and SUSD. Cutting commute time will provide a competitive advantage to those employers in the area. This will improve the linkages between jobs and housing in Scottsdale.

**Evaluate the area's walkability.** Conventional land-use regulation often prohibits the mixing of land uses, thus lengthening trips and making walking a less viable alternative to driving. Many office buildings and retail establishments are surrounded by large parking lots, which force pedestrians to navigate through a sea of parked and moving cars.

Communities that are largely auto-dependent further reduce pedestrian activity. Conventional street design suggests wide streets with few crosswalks, long blocks, and limited pedestrian infrastructure—such as sidewalks, median strips, or traffic-

"Think of McDowell not as a car zone but as a community; not as a street but as a place."  
Ross Cromarty, City Of  
Scottsdale Planning Department

calming features. The conventional design of residential developments also acts as a disincentive to pedestrian activity. Setback requirements, large minimum lot requirements, and indirect street routes, including cul-de-sacs, increase the distance between pedestrians and destinations.

The McDowell Corridor should be evaluated for its walkability. More frequent crosswalks that connect sidewalk to median to sidewalk with longer crossing times would encourage more walking. Redesigning vacant lots to mixed use projects with buildings on the street instead of behind large parking lots would invite more pedestrians. The use of improved median strips will encourage more people to walk and narrowing streets will focus the area as a pedestrian friendly area that focuses on people rather than cars.

"Neighbors are not cats waiting to pounce on the mice. They are waiting for good projects to support and nurture through the development process." Sonnie Kirtley, Coalition of Greater Scottsdale

**Include citizen involvement in the process.**

Essential to the success of any plan for redevelopment is citizen involvement. Citizen participation can lead to creative solutions, speedy resolution of development disputes, and greater community understanding of the importance of good planning and investment. High levels of public awareness, better definitions of community needs and plans that meet those needs make for better projects. Citizen involvement should occur as early and as often as possible. In the long run citizen participation improves public support for any redevelopment ideas and activities.



## MEASURING SUCCESS

Measuring the success of reinventing the McDowell Corridor as a livable community will require answering these questions about the area. **Does the McDowell Corridor:**

- Attract new businesses?
- Attract new investment dollars?
- Showcase an innovative partnership between the public and private sectors?
- Attract new residents?
- Offer a variety of housing, including affordable owned and rental housing, which is attractive to people with a range of incomes, lifestyles and needs: stand-alone single-family homes, condominiums, flats, townhomes, and apartments?
- Make housing part of the larger community by putting it near places people need or want to go, including work places, grocery stores, parks, and easy access to transit?
- Encourage mixed use development that blends places to live, work and shop?
- Encourage density where appropriate near job centers, along heavy travel corridors and near public transportation?
- Provide sensible alternative transportation choices available such as sidewalks, bike lanes, walkable communities and public transportation?

When we can answer affirmatively to these questions, we will know that we have successfully transformed the McDowell Corridor into a Livable Community.



## ***RESOURCES***

[www.jchs.harvard.edu](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu): Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies

[www.walktoschool.org](http://www.walktoschool.org): National Center for Safe Routes to School

[www.livablecommunitiescoalition.org](http://www.livablecommunitiescoalition.org): Livable Communities Coalition

[www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org): American Planning Association

<http://knowledgeplex.org>: Fannie Mae Foundation

<http://www.policylink.org/EquitableDevelopment>: PolicyLink's Equitable Development Toolkit

<http://www.designadvisor.org>: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Affordable Housing Design Advisor

[www.bicyclefriendlycommunity.org](http://www.bicyclefriendlycommunity.org): League of American Bicyclists

[www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org): Urban Land Institute

[www.angeloueconomics.com](http://www.angeloueconomics.com): Place Branding

[www.lgc.org](http://www.lgc.org): Local Government Commission

<http://www.live-work.com/lwi>: The Live Work Institute

<http://www.rwjf.org/files/publications/other/HealthyCommunityDesign.pdf>: Healthy Community Design by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, December 2004

<http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/pdf/density.pdf>: Creating Great Neighborhoods: Density in your Community by Local Government Commission in cooperation with the U.S. EPA. September 2003

<http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/Assets/documents/economics/Southern+Scottsdale+Market+Study.pdf>: The Market for Retail and Office Uses and Strategic Recommendations for the Enhancement of Southern Scottsdale by Gruen Gruen + Associates, December 2007

<http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/Assets/documents/historiczoning/postwarstudy.pdf>: Postwar Modern Housing and a Geographic Information System Study of Scottsdale Subdivisions By Elizabeth S. Wilson, M.E.P., August 2002





[http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/Assets/documents/design/SouthernScottsdaleThemes\\$!26PrioritiesWorkshopSummary.pdf](http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/Assets/documents/design/SouthernScottsdaleThemes$!26PrioritiesWorkshopSummary.pdf): Southern Scottsdale Community Area Plan Vision Themes and Priorities Workshop Summary, May 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008

<http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/Assets/documents/asuscottsdale/DesignGuidelines.pdf>: Design Guidelines and Development Framework for the ASU-Scottsdale Center for New Technology and Innovation and the Surrounding Area, City of Scottsdale Ad Hoc Citizens Advisory Working Group, February 2005

<http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/Assets/documents/finance/2008+Financial+Trends.pdf>: City of Scottsdale Annual Financial Trends 2008

<http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/Assets/documents/finance/Feb2009finupdate.pdf>: City of Scottsdale Monthly Financial Update February 2009

<http://pacific.bizjournals.com/pacific/stories/2001/03/story7.html>

Chris Casacchia, *Scottsdale Motor Mile plagued by closures*, Phoenix Business Journal, June 12, 2009, p.1.

Ben DiPietro, *Lawmakers Tinker with Automatic Permit Approval Law*

Bernard H. Siegan, *Land Use without Zoning* 222 (Lexington Books, D.C. Heath and Company, 1972)

Arizona State Constitution

City Charter, Scottsdale, Arizona

As a nonpartisan research and educational organization, LINKS is dedicated to creating a Scottsdale community that is informed and engaged in local public policy. To do this we facilitate collaborative interaction among the greater Scottsdale community to affect long-term, non-partisan solutions.



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